

Dear Chairman and members of the Senate Fish & Game committee,

My name is Russ Kipp; I am the President of the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association. I stand in **support of HB 607.**

Both resident and non-resident must purchase an elk license as a prerequisite to applying for a special permit. Permits are used to limit the number of hunters in a particular area. Permits are available through a drawing with 90% being awarded to resident hunters and 10% to non-resident hunters.

The resident cost for an elk license is \$20.00 plus \$8.00 for a conservation license. Non-resident elk license cost is \$812. and the non-resident elk-deer license cost \$912. Currently if a non-resident applies for a special permit and is unsuccessful in drawing that permit, then chooses to return his elk license because of not drawing a permit he loses 20% of the license fees mention above. If a resident is unsuccessful in drawing a special permit he only loses a \$5. drawing fee.

HB 607 would give non-residents an opportunity to opt-out of the elk license up front if they were unsuccessful in drawing the special permit and retain the deer license. This would save the FW&P the hassle of issuing a license, getting it returned because of an unsuccessful permit drawing, then reissuing the license. It does not create additional licenses just better utilization of existing licenses that have been in place since 1975.

HB 607 is consistent with I-161; it treats all non-residents equal, it does not create an outfitter set-aside and it does create revenue for the FW&P.

**Please support HB 607.**

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